

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

\_\_\_\_\_ New Submission        X   Amended Submission

### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park

Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park (amended)

—J. W. Swanson and the Development of Boat Concession Operations

### C. Form Prepared by:

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### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

### Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.

Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

### **E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

### **Page Numbers**

(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park 1  
(pertinent excerpts from original document related to the context)

Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park (amended)  
—J. W. Swanson and the Development of Boat Concession Operations

### Introductory Statement on Amending the MPD:

The original Multiple Property Listing prepared by Ann Hubber in July 1995 presented four contexts: *Development of Administrative Infrastructure in Glacier National Park 1910-1945*, *Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park, 1910-1945*, *Private Development in Glacier National Park, 1900-1945*, and *Influence of Landscape Architecture on National Park Service Facilities and the Development of Rustic Building Design, 1918-1942*. Within those four contexts, the document focused on land-based resources, with the result that two structures related to the operation of boats in the Park are listed in the National Register under the Multiple Property Listing; Fish Creek Bay Boathouse (24FH0891) and Swanson/Two Medicine Boathouse (24GL0883) were both built by J.W. Swanson and remain in use in their original capacity to dry-dock historic wooden boats, also built by Swanson, during the Period of Significance of 1910-1945.

Though some mention of water-related resources, specifically the boats of Glacier National Park, occurred throughout the original document, principally under the context presented for the development of recreation (concession) infrastructure in the Park, the discussion was muted as the actual boats fell outside the purview of the original document. Although boating-related activity had occurred early in the park's history, it was J.W. Swanson who really put his stamp on boating in the park. Five historic Swanson vessels continue to operate in their original capacity. All five continue to receive the same attentive maintenance using traditional boat-working techniques and materials employed by J.W. Swanson. Swanson built and operated many boats in Glacier. His business included operation under his own concession's permit, under contract with the Glacier Park Hotel Company (Great Northern Railway's tourism subsidiary), the Glacier Transportation Company, and with Frank Kelly and John Lewis for transportation to lodging on Lake McDonald. In 1938, Swanson sold his boats and concession contract to Arthur J. Burch

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

and the Burch family who continue to maintain and operate them.

The Swanson boats that remain are significant, rare examples of a type of boat once common on American waterways from Florida's Silver Springs to the Wisconsin Dells.<sup>1</sup> Swanson's legacy as the most prolific and outstanding boat-builder and boat service provider during the infancy of Glacier's recreation infrastructure development warrants strong consideration for recognition of his boats in the National Register of Historic Places. The continuity of service and maintenance of these vessels by the Burch family allows for thousands of park visitors every summer to view and experience the park in an authentically historic manner consistent with the first Glacier tourists. Recognition of their importance enhances the historic record of the Park and highlight Swanson's valuable contribution to the development of lasting, exceptional visitor services.

This amendment to the original Multiple Property Listing document expands the *Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park, 1910-1945* providing further information regarding the importance and role of the boats that plied, and continue to service the lakes of Glacier National Park. To provide background, an edited version of the original Recreation (Concession) context that focuses largely on the non-lodging aspects of the concessions appears below prior to the presentation of the expanded (amended) context that focuses solely on the boats of Glacier National Park. Sentences or words that appear in italics within and outside of paragraphs are not found in the original Multiple Property Listing but are inserted to provide transitions between paragraphs to allow for easier reading.

## CONTEXT 2: DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATION (CONCESSION) INFRASTRUCTURE IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, 1910-1945 (edited)

It was the promise of tourism that prompted sustained private interest in what would become Glacier National Park. The experience of Yellowstone, Sequoia, Yosemite, and General Grant (created in 1872, 1890, 1890, and 1890, respectively) demonstrated that federal recreation preserves could be good business for surrounding communities. Local hostility to the "locking up" of the Glacier region was thus tempered by commercial interest in tourism.<sup>2</sup> Opposition also was curbed by the federal government's decision to protect private ownership of those limited facilities that had been constructed in the Glacier region prior to creation of the park.<sup>3</sup>

Efforts to reserve a federal enclave in the Glacier region further benefitted from the publicity provided by such men as George Bird Grinnell and James Willard Schultz. Schultz and Grinnell first visited the east-side valleys in the 1880s and 1890s; Grinnell followed his visits with enthusiastic articles on the conservation and recreational potential of the area.<sup>4</sup> Grinnell and others effectively linked the conservation ethic to commercial interest, arguing that Glacier's economic future was not locked within the glacial valleys and unyielding terrain but rather was intrinsically tied to protection of those features.

<sup>1</sup> "Memorandum to Chief Historian (U.S. Department of Interior) from Maritime Historian Foster, Dec. 15, 1988." Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

<sup>2</sup> Ise, *Our National Park Policy, A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> Glacier Organic Act [Title 16, U.S.C.A.], assumed that any persons having a pre-1910 holding were entitled to "full use and enjoyment of their land." Also see Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," pp. 20, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Historic Research Associates (HRA), *Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I*. Report prepared for the United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Colorado, 1980, p. 21; George Bird Grinnell, "Crown of the Continent," *Century Magazine*, Vol. 62, Sept. 1901, pp. 660-672.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

Eastern sportsmen and local entrepreneurs were joined by national businessmen such as Great Northern Railway Company President James J. Hill. Hill possessed the necessary vision and capital to develop a tourist infrastructure and industry in the Glacier country.<sup>5</sup> Just as significantly, creation of Glacier National Park coincided with an important "shift and flux in the habits of Americans at leisure."<sup>6</sup>

## MARKET CONDITIONS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONCESSION DEVELOPMENT

The early decades of the 20th century were marked by the rise of a traveling middle class possessing both wealth and leisure, by an abundance of elegantly equipped transcontinental railroads, and by increased interest in the American West as the "passing of the frontier" lent a nostalgic quality to travels beyond the Missouri River.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the advent of World War I and restrictions on American travel abroad forced a new appreciation of American destinations. These developments encouraged a surge of travel to the western states.

Entrepreneurs, including the concessioners in the western national parks, utilized this nostalgic interest, "chang[ing] the West into what they thought [the tourist] wanted it to be."<sup>8</sup> The tourists' ideal was most often defined as a West of cowboys, Indians, mountainmen and undeveloped vistas, yet a West tamed of its physical and psychological dangers. In large part, the harsh edges of the West had been softened by settlement and transcontinental travel. Psychologically, these edges were blunted by denoting western landscapes in civilized terms - "America's Alps," "America's Riviera" - and filling western resorts and parks with European architecture.<sup>9</sup>

Much of Glacier's early popularity (1910-1930) was tied to this nationwide interest in the West. In Glacier, where western hardship was tempered by elegant accommodations and railroad access, concessioners created a world of western myth where the traveler could escape the perceived predictability of eastern life. Visitors from the eastern states, arriving at the Great Northern Railway terminus in Midvale (East Glacier) found:

a fine touch of western life, with Indians, cowboys, and picturesque characters contributing to its color. An encampment of Blackfeet is on Midvale Creek; these Indians dance, and tell stories every evening at the [East Glacier] hotel.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, owners of the saddle-horse concessions sent "cow-boy attired agents" to Chicago to ride the trains with the tourists headed for Glacier. Howard Hays, owner of the transportation concession in Glacier, searched for stories of poachers and trappers to use in his drivers' interpretive monologues. Members of the "Glacier Park Tribe" (the Blackfeet), under the auspices of the Great Northern, traveled to urban centers to promote the park.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I, 1980, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, p. 2; Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West*, pp. vii and 37.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., passim.

<sup>10</sup> Brochure, "Glacier National Park, 1920," Glacier National Park description and travels, Montana Historical Society Library (MHSL), Helena, Montana.

<sup>11</sup> Lon Garrison, "Parks Survive a War," in *The Making of a Ranger*, Oral History Collection [OHC], Ruhle Library, West Glacier, Montana [MT]; Howard Hays to Park Superintendent Scoyen, 2/13/37, Folder 38-1, Glacier National Park Archives [GNPA], Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT; Ober, "Enmity and Alliance," p. 84.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

An infusion of European civility moderated, and confused, the western landscape. The Great Northern Pullmans bringing eastern travelers to "America's Alps" in the 1910s and 1920s were elegantly appointed. Dining and sleeping cars were finished in oak and were furnished with plush carpets, curtains and ornate lamps, prompting novelist Mary Roberts Rinehart to complain that "getting to Glacier Park Station, remote as it seemed, had been almost surprisingly easy. Was this then, going to the borderland of civilization, the last stronghold of the old West?"<sup>12</sup> Saddle-sore travelers, exploring Glacier's backcountry, were greeted at Swiss-style chalets by waitresses in Swiss "dirndls" who "crumbed the table and brought in desert." Lewis Hotel (Lake McDonald Lodge), the terminus of the Gunsight Trail over the Continental Divide, signaled a return "to civilization... to stays and skirts, to roofs, and servants, ... to fox trotting and one stepping, in riding boots, with an orchestra."<sup>13</sup> Thus, Glacier National Park concessioners created a western cultural experience while simultaneously satisfying "rail tourists [who] ... tended to look for evidence of European and eastern civilization in their western travels."<sup>14</sup>

The development of facilities tailored to the tangible and intangible demands of early 20th-century American tourists was the responsibility of both concessioners, who sought profits, and of the Department of the Interior/National Park Service, which had a statutory mandate to preserve the national parks for the maximum enjoyment of the public. A national concession policy was first instituted at Yellowstone National Park during the late 19th century. The creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 coincided with public distrust of government management and of monopoly. Private enterprise, subject to the laws of competition and spared the taint of monopoly's abuses and government's inefficiency, was believed best able to meet public needs. Thus the act providing for Yellowstone National Park stipulated that private enterprise would develop the park's visitor facilities under restrictions established by the Interior Department.<sup>15</sup>

Between 1872 and 1882, private enterprise provided inadequate hotels, poor food, and a needless duplication of transportation services. When the Northern Pacific Railway tracks reached the northwest corner of Yellowstone in 1882, a solution began to emerge. The federal government would continue to regulate concession activities, while allowing for the establishment of a "natural monopoly." The Northern Pacific had both a vested interest in the park and the fiscal resources to provide for the opulent accommodations that Interior Department officials thought befitting a national park. Public revolt against the granting of such a monopoly to a railroad - symbol of monopoly abuse and gilded-age excess- was stymied by the Northern Pacific's political power and by the paucity of other parties interested in Yellowstone development.<sup>16</sup>

Prior to the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, the Department of the Interior was responsible not only for assuring the development of tourist facilities but also for protecting tourist interests and for protecting federal lands for future generations. An unyielding bureaucracy subject to political graft, saddled with the management of disparate affairs, and lacking a dependable park budget, the Department's policy was often one of neglect. Park management was decentralized, with local administrators frequently giving

<sup>12</sup> Ralph Hidy, Muriel E. Hidy, and Roy V. Scott with Don L. Hofsommer, *The Great Northern Railway, A History* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1988), p. 121; Mary Roberts Rinehart, *Through Glacier Park in 1915* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Warren J. Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979), p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> See Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, Chapter 1, and Richard A. Bartlett, "The Concessionaires of Yellowstone National Park: Genesis of a Policy, 1882-1892," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Jan. 1983, Vol. 74, no. 1, p. 2, for a complete discussion of the evolution of a concession policy within Yellowstone.

<sup>16</sup> Bartlett, "The Concessionaires of Yellowstone National Park," p. 6.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

concessioners free reign in park development. The 1916 creation of the National Park Service provided an agency solely responsible for park management and for the development of a centralized concession policy. To this end, in 1918, the National Park Service introduced a landscape engineering division, responsible for overseeing concessioners' standing operations and development plans.<sup>17</sup>

## RAIL-RELATED FACILITIES: WEST SIDE AND EAST SIDE DEVELOPMENT, 1910-1930

### West Side Development

Prior to the 1897 construction of a bridge across the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, tourists traveling between Belton and Lake McDonald crossed the river in rowboats provided by homesteaders Frank Kelly, H. D. Apgar, and Charlie Howe. They completed their journey to the foot of the lake in wagons or buckboards.<sup>18</sup> At least two early entrepreneurs, Dow and Apgar, provided stage service between the Belton Hotel and Lake McDonald. Apgar's wagon was "painted red with a lot of gold on it. It kind of looked like a circus wagon."<sup>19</sup>

*One of the earliest uses of a steam boat in the area was by George Snyder, who had begun operating the 40-foot steam boat in approximately 1898. Prior to that time visitors used a rowboat to travel from Apgar to the upper-lake facilities. Between 1906 and 1911, Kelly introduced three gas-powered launches, two with a 25-person capacity and one with a 100-person capacity.*<sup>20</sup>

*In addition to the use of boats for transportation, recreation opportunities associated with early 1900 accommodations included boating on Lake McDonald, guided fishing trips to nearby lakes, and white-water trips from West Glacier to Bad Rock Canyon. A "very big pier that went way out into the lake," a storehouse with camping supplies, and a big hay warehouse" were all located in Apgar.*<sup>21</sup>

*In terms of lodging, the principal post-1910 development was the Lewis Glacier Hotel (now the Lake McDonald Lodge), built in 1913-1914 on the site of the original Snyder Hotel.*<sup>22</sup> *The hotel was able to boast about recreation opportunities that included boat trips on Lake McDonald, and guided pack trips to Avalanche Lake, Sperry Glacier, and over Gunsight Pass to the eastern side of the park.*

### East Side Development

Louis W. Hill's role in the establishment of Glacier National Park remains an issue of historical debate. His significant role in developing an elaborate accommodation-recreation system on the east side of Glacier

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<sup>17</sup> Alan S. Newell, "Public and Private Interests in our National Parks," *Forest and Conservation History*, Vol. 34 (April 1990), No. 2, p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> Mrs. William Haworth, interviewed by Lewis Sabo, Feb. 20, 1979, OHC, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Living History Resource Data, Mrs. Ida Mae Snyder, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT; HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I, p. 73; "Annual Report to the SI, 1911," p. 11, Superintendent's Annual Reports, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>21</sup> Henderson interview, Aug. 25, 1977, OHC, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>22</sup> The original Snyder Hotel was located on the site of the dining room of the current facility. Analysis of photos of the Snyder Hotel suggests that it could have been incorporated into the lodge structure; McDonald, Historical Preservation Architectural Guide, Lake McDonald Lodge, Figure 1.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

National Park, however, is unquestioned.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the need to increase passenger travel meshed well with Hill's long-standing interest in the West generally and in the Glacier region in particular.

The success of the passenger trade was dependent upon adequate lodging, transportation, and recreation facilities within the park. The Great Northern's role quickly escalated from that of providing rail transportation to the park to that of primary concessioner. The Department of the Interior had long maintained that tourist facilities belonged in the hands of private enterprise. The Great Northern proved to be the only enterprise with adequate financial resources and sufficient pecuniary interest to invest heavily in Glacier's development. As one writer has suggested, "the Great Northern adopted the Park as its own."<sup>24</sup>

Four years after passage of the Glacier National Park enabling legislation, the Great Northern Railway Company had constructed an elaborate European style hotel-trail-chalet network valued at over two million dollars.<sup>25</sup> This development was concentrated on the east side of the Continental Divide... In support of the accommodations network, the Great Northern made Glacier National Park the figurehead of its passenger rail service, extolling Americans to "See America First [via] The Great Northern Railway National Park Route," and embarking on an extensive media campaign to advertise the wonders of "The Park."<sup>26</sup>

The large hotels built at the ends of rail, stage, or coach transportation routes formed the cornerstones of Louis Hill's accommodations network. These hotels were in turn located at the end of boat lines or horse trails that led to tent camps or, by 1914, to backcountry Swiss-style chalet complexes. Bus, boat, and saddle-horse facilities, integral to the accommodations network, were operated by private concessioners - veiled subsidiaries or complementary companies who guided guests along Great Northern-maintained trails and roads, and lodged guests at Great Northern hotels.

Rudimentary access to well-appointed facilities highlighted the contrast between western nostalgia and eastern comfort. Many of the tent camps and chalets were accessible only by foot or horseback.

By the summer of 1912, construction of "a number of splendid hotel colonies," located on the original sites of the tent camps, had begun.<sup>27</sup> By 1914, the Great Northern had completed construction of chalets at Two Medicine, Cut Bank, St. Mary, Going-to-the-Sun, (also known as Sun Camp or Upper St. Mary), Many Glacier, Gunsight, and Sperry.<sup>28</sup> Granite, Sperry, and Gunsight were accessible only by foot or horseback. Going-to-the-Sun was accessible by either boat, launched from the St. Mary complex, or by horseback.<sup>29</sup>

A "typical pack trip" ... might:

go from East Glacier to Two Medicine Chalets via the Mt. Henry Trail [and then] to Cut Bank Chalets. This route was up past Old Man Lake. Then to St. Mary Chalets, located near the Ranger

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I.

<sup>24</sup> HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I, p. 6; Hidy, et al., *The Great Northern Railway*, p. 124; Tom Dillon, *Over the Trails of Glacier National Park* (Minneapolis: Great Northern Railway, c. 1912), p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> In 1915, the Great Northern Railway created the Glacier Park Hotel Co., a subsidiary responsible for Glacier Park management. The name was later changed to the Glacier Park Co., HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Hidy, et al., *The Great Northern Railway*, p. 124; Ober, "Enmity and Alliance;" Nora Spanish, interviewed by Francis W. Welling, OHC, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT; HRA, Historic Resources Study, Glacier National Park and Historic Structures Survey, Part I, pp. 81-82.

<sup>27</sup> Dillon, *Over the Trails in Glacier National Park*.

<sup>28</sup> After its inaugural season of 1913, Gunsight Chalet was destroyed by an avalanche and was never rebuilt.

<sup>29</sup> A set of railroad tracks led down into the water next to the dock at St. Mary Chalet. A wagon on the tracks hauled luggage off and on to the launches; Frank Harrison, interviewed by Cynthia Mish, August 1, 1975, OHC, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

Station, [via] the old Boundary Trail; then by boat to the Sun Chalets at Sun Point - the best of the Chalets. Then Flattop to Sherburne Dam to Many Glacier [with] side trips to Cracker, Grinnell, and Iceberg; then over Swiftcurrent to Granite "to take in the bears"; then either back to Many or down to McDonald via the Packer's Roost trail. [Sometimes] there were up to 180 people and over 200 horses in a party.<sup>30</sup>

Although Hill provided only accommodation facilities, the links in his network were filled by transportation and tent-camp concessioners who "enjoyed a close working relationship" with Great Northern officials.<sup>31</sup> During the 1920s, the Park Saddle Horse Company, the exclusive saddle horse concessioner, supported the hotel-trail-chalet network with tent camps at Goathaunt, Red Eagle, Cosley (Crossley) Lake, and Fifty Mountain.

Additional post-1914 resources included boat facilities for the cruiser International and Goathaunt Camp, developed by private entrepreneur H. H. Hanson between 1918 and 1927. This latter camp consisted of "a tourist supply station at the south end of Lake Waterton for the sale of lunch stuffs, cigars, tobacco and other tourist supplies and to maintain a few tents for the furnishing of sleeping accommodations to tourists." A boat landing was constructed of the "old logs lying on the shore of the lake and ... the dry small timber down on the mountain side."<sup>32</sup> By 1923, the complex had been expanded to include permanent kitchen and lodging facilities. Facilities associated with the International included a boathouse and a small cabin for the launch skipper.

Transportation between accommodation facilities was provided by either foot, horse stage, auto, gasoline launch, or saddle-horse. The Great Northern operated a 64' and a 25' launch on St. Mary Lake, both of which provided boat service between St. Mary Chalet and Going-to-the-Sun Chalets. A 30', 15 person capacity, launch was reserved for "special pleasure trips on St. Mary Lake." Facilities associated with the St. Mary boat service included a boathouse, cradle, track, and winch.<sup>33</sup> The Little Chief and the Sinopah, built by Captain J. W. "Billy" Swanson with cedar-planked hulls, and an approximately 50-passenger capacity, began operation on St. Mary Lake in the late 1920s. The 73 foot, 250 passenger International began operation on Waterton Lake in 1927 and the DeSmet first plied Lake McDonald in 1930. Swanson instituted launch service on Two Medicine Lake in 1920; facilities associated with this operation included two boathouses and a pier. Rowboats were available at Two Medicine, Swiftcurrent, and St. Mary.<sup>34</sup>

Between 1911 and 1914, W. A. Brewster offered the east side's primary stage and auto transportation. His three stages between Midvale, St. Mary, and Many Glacier were expanded in 1913 with the introduction of six-passenger Chalmers touring cars to be used exclusively by tourists lodging at Great Northern facilities. Reports of poor service, however, left Brewster vulnerable to competition from rival concessioner Roe Emery who, by 1913, had introduced a fleet of White touring buses. In 1914, Hill granted Emery the exclusive privilege of transporting Great Northern clientele. By 1915, Emery and the newly incorporated Glacier Park Transport Company held sole right to the auto concession service on the east side of the park. Brewster's stage, St. Mary to Many Glacier, however, continued to provide the primary means of

<sup>30</sup> Monroe and Monroe interviews, OHC, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>31</sup> Howard Hays, president Glacier Park Transport Co., to J. R. Britton, Traffic manager, Intermountain Transportation Co., November 7, 1938, Folder 38-1, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>32</sup> Acting Assistant Director of the Department of the Interior, F. W. Griffith, to W. W. Payne, Feb. 26, 1918, Folder 38-6, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>33</sup> J. M. Cathcart, Great Northern Railway Company, to J. L. Galen, Supt., Glacier National Park, March 6, 1913, Folder 37-6; Jeffries, Manager Glacier Park Company, to J.W. Emmert, Glacier National Park Superintendent, May 31, 1951, Folder 37-5, both at GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>34</sup> Holterman, Jack, "Boats in Glacier" (unpublished document, no date), GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

transportation during periods of bad weather or poor road conditions.<sup>35</sup> In 1915, the Glacier Park Transport Company had twenty 12-passenger White touring buses and seven, 6-passenger White touring cars, all of which operated between the Midvale Depot, Many Glacier, Two Medicine, and St. Mary.<sup>36</sup> Bus service on Glacier's west side, between Belton and Glacier Hotel, and Belton and Bowman Lake (Skyland Camp) was established by the 1920s.<sup>37</sup>

Boat, stage, and auto service, however, penetrated only the perimeter of the park. Glacier remained "a trail park" during the first two decades, where the "coach-and-four [and] the honking automobile" were seen as incongruous elements.<sup>38</sup> In 1915, 17 separate concessioners supplied saddle horses and guides for backcountry trips. The newly formed National Park Service consolidated the saddle horse operators in 1916 by ordering that "the saddle and pack horse transportation service in the reservation be handled by one company" and declining to renew outstanding concession permits.<sup>39</sup> George Noffsinger of the Park Saddle Horse Company became the sole concessioner, eventually accumulating more stock "than all of the other National Parks combined [approximately 1000 head]."<sup>40</sup> Despite these numbers, saddle-horse shortages were occasionally "acute ... due to unprecedented demand for large numbers by camping parties."<sup>41</sup>

Louis Hill's Great Northern-financed park concessions operated under little control from the Department of the Interior between 1911 and 1916.<sup>42</sup> The railroad's willingness to invest heavily in the park's concessions was seen by the Department of Interior as benefiting congressionally mandated park goals. Limited congressional funding, primitive communication lines between the east and west sides, and a lack of a clearly stated national concession policy also resulted in the Great Northern's ability to operate in Glacier with virtual impunity.<sup>43</sup> The Great Northern offered an accommodation-transportation-recreation network

<sup>35</sup> Superintendent, Glacier National Park, to Roe Emery, June 24, 1914, Folder 37-10, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>36</sup> Supervisor, Glacier National Park, to the Honorable Secretary of the Interior, Dec. 16, 1915, Folder 37-10, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>37</sup> Various correspondence, 1914-1923, Folder 37-10, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>38</sup> Dillon, *Over the Trails of Glacier National Park*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Superintendent of National Parks to all Saddle-horse Concessionaires, n.d. (c. Feb. 1916), Folder 39-1, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>40</sup> "Annual Report to the SI, 1920," p. 4, Superintendent's Annual Reports, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>41</sup> Superintendent Glacier National Park to the Hon. Franklin K. Lane, August 18, 1919, Folder 39-1, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>42</sup> For a complete discussion of the interdependent relationship between park and Great Northern officials see Michael G. Schene, "The Crown of the Continent: Private Enterprise and Public Interest in the Early Development of Glacier National Park, 1910-17," *Forest Conservation History*, April 1990, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 69-75.

<sup>43</sup> "Annual Report to the SI, 1917," p. 17, Superintendent's Annual Reports, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

Not all east-side concessionaires escaped regulation to the same degree. The 1916 decision to combine all horse concessions clearly reflected the nascent NPS's desire to create more manageable and presumably more efficient monopolies. Similarly, the NPS's displeasure with H. H. Hanson's Gothaunt facilities reflected the NPS's increased control over the nature of park facilities. In 1919, the NPS denied Hanson's request to expand his operation on the grounds that "we want to study the development of this region in its relation to improvements already made on the east and west sides of the park before proceeding with any further development of the northern section of the park." However, in 1920 a permit was granted for the construction of permanent kitchen and lodging facilities. By 1923, the NPS rued its decision:

It might have been better not to have granted the concession until we could get somebody in there who could deliver the goods in better shape than Mr. Hanson. You will realize that our disinclination to take radical action by canceling the permit instead of giving him additional time is due to the fact that, as experience has shown in other Parks, these old-timers always raise the cry that they are the pioneers and are held down by the Park Service. [Yet], Mr. Hanson only has a five-year permit, expiring in 1925, [and] we think the situation will take care of itself eventually.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property ListingMontana  
State

"appropriate" to a national park and provided the east-side transportation infrastructure necessary to park administration.

World War II effectively stalled park development and NPS demands upon concessioners. Gas rationing measures limited private travel and suspended all sightseeing transportation operations.<sup>44</sup> The Glacier Park Company, the Park Transport Company, and the Park Saddle Horse Company were thus granted permission to suspend those operations deemed economically unfeasible. Although the high mountain tent camps and all sight-seeing trips- either by boat or tour bus - were closed or canceled in 1942, alternate chalet and hotel facilities, bus service between railheads and hotels, and day saddle trips remained available. Following three seasons of dismal visitation, most of these limited services were also cancelled and only the Rising Sun Coffee Shop and Cabin Camp and the Lake McDonald boat rental concession remained open.<sup>45</sup>

The Park Saddle Horse Company and the Cut Bank, Going-to-the-Sun, and St. Mary chalet complexes, already challenged by the depression and the increased popularity of auto-related recreation and accommodations, did not survive the war curtailments.<sup>46</sup> In mute testimony to the demise of Hill's rail/trail network, the Park Saddle Horse Company ceased operation and all three chalets were razed in the late 1940s. The "largest saddle horse operation in the world ... [with] guides who knew the trails thoroughly and were lavish with their home spun yarns around the evening campfires" was replaced by a variety of small-scale operators who, due both to the breakdown in the chalet network and the increased speed with which travelers toured the parks, concentrated on short day trips.<sup>47</sup>

The Glacier Park Transport Company, purchased by experienced transport concessioner Howard Hays in 1927, was also affected by increased auto traffic, the depression, and World War II travel restrictions. Ironically, Hays "when [he] bought out the bus line, in effect bet \$400,000 that [Glacier was] not a trail park." Much anticipated in-park highway development was crucial to Hays' success. Hays, however, also bet that Glacier would remain "a resort park where the majority of visitors are more quality conscious than price conscious." Hays cultivated this clientele by advertising heavily in rail journals and avoiding advertisements in the AAA, Auto Clubs, and State Highway Commission publications.<sup>48</sup> Yet as highway development sped the displacement of Glacier's traditional rail clientele (dependent upon leased transportation) with the auto tourist, Hays' investment began to falter. In 1955, Hays sold the Park

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Horace M. Albright, Acting Director of the National Park Service, to W. W. Payne, Superintendent Glacier National Park, May 2, 1919, Folder 38-6; Amo Cammer, Acting Director of the National Park Service, to J. Ross Eakin, Superintendent Glacier National Park, August 14, 1923, Folder 38-6, both in GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>44</sup> Howard H. Hays, President, Glacier Park Transport Co, to A.J. Dickinson, Great Northern Railway, June 8, 1942, Folder 38-2, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum, Noble J. Wilt, Acting Director, Park Operators Division, to the Superintendent, Glacier National Park, June 25, 1942, Folder 38-2; J. W. Emmert, Superintendent, Glacier National Park, to Howard H. Hays, President, Glacier Park Transport Company, June 8, 1945, Folder 38-3, both in GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>46</sup> In 1926, 26 percent of park visitors leased the Park Saddle Horse Company horses and guides. Many of these tourists had also stayed at the chalets. In 1940, only 3 percent of park visitors used those same facilities. E. T. Scoyen, Superintendent, Glacier National Park, to the Director, National Park Service, February 28, 1933, Folder 33-4; Annual Financial Reports, 1926-1940, Park Saddle Horse Company, Folder 33-4, both in GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>47</sup> Lon Garrison, "Feature Story on Park Saddle Horse Company, Glacier National Park," 1945, Folder 39-7, GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>48</sup> Howard H. Hays to E. T. Scoyen, Superintendent Glacier National Park, April 30, 1938, Folder 38-1; Howard H. Hays to J. R. Britton, Traffic Manager, Intermountain Transportation Co., November 7, 1938, Folder 38-1, both in GNPA, Ruhle Library, West Glacier, MT.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

Transport Company to the Glacier Park Company.<sup>49</sup>

Boat facilities, though no longer critical links in the park's transportation network, were expanded to accommodate the recreation demands of the increasingly numerous auto tourist. By the mid-1940s, the Glacier Park Boat Company, the Glacier Park Company, and the Glacier Park Transport Company operated boats on Lake McDonald, Two Medicine, and Waterton lakes. Vessels constructed post-World War II included the Morning Eagle, cedar-planked with a 65-passenger capacity, which began operation on Lake Josephine in 1945, and the mahogany-planked, 40-passenger capacity Red Eagle, built by the Stan Craft Boat Company in 1957 and operated on St. Mary Lake. The construction of a new dock at Rising Sun to accommodate the Red Eagle allowed for the removal of the deteriorating Sun Point dock.<sup>50</sup>

*Non-lodging related concessions within the Park was always an important aspect of the Park's operation.* In 1946, NPS Director Newton B. Drury wrote:

the National Park Service hopes to select concessioners that are amply financed to install the facilities, are able to conduct the business in a sound manner, will work closely with the National Park Service and have sympathy for and understanding of its policies and its obligations to serve the public.<sup>51</sup>

Such ideal concessioners were not, however, expected to invest without "a reasonable expectation of fair earnings and the ultimate amortization of their interests."<sup>52</sup>

The search for balance between private profit and public service dominates the history of concessions within Glacier National Park. Anticipating public demand and serving public needs was a mandate of the NPS and was in the best interest of those private entrepreneurs who risked federal interference, a short travel season, and constant flux in American travel patterns in hopes of realizing a profit. The nature and pace of concession development within Glacier National Park thus provides a stage for the study of the appeal of the American West, changes in travel patterns, the ongoing and much-documented debate between development and conservation interests, and the relationship between federal custodians and private entrepreneurs.

West-side development, prior to creation of the park and full development of an eastern rail clientele, was primitive in design and services offered. This ambiance, "western" yet not self-consciously so, was dictated not only by the limited funds of the private developers, but also by limited transportation means and the nature of the local clientele. On the park's east side, the Great Northern, with the full support of the Interior Department, consciously created a western experience of horses, Indians, and isolated destinations, suitable to the eastern travelers' nostalgic journey into the vanishing American West. European comforts, also demanded by the predominantly wealthy clientele, tempered the rustic theme. Delivered to this pre-industrial haven by the symbol of the Industrial Age, rail clientele provided a captive (and thus profitable) audience for Louis Hill's rail/trail, hotel/chalet network.

As the auto tourist, independently mobile and possessing limited funds, replaced the captive and wealthy clientele, the nature of the accommodation/transportation/recreation infrastructure evolved. This evolution was prompted both by an increasingly powerful National Park Service "obligated to serve the public" and by the inevitable conclusion of the principal concessioner that its rail network was no longer profitable.

<sup>49</sup> The Great Northern, though retreating from Glacier, believed that a concession package guaranteeing monopoly over park activities would be more attractive to perspective buyers.

<sup>50</sup> Holterman, "Boats in Glacier."

<sup>51</sup> Report of the Director, NPS, to SI, 1946, p. 317.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 312.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

Post-1930 development of low-cost, car-camp facilities thus clearly represented the "new" traveling public, more interested in economy' less interested in European comfort or expensive western nostalgia. Space-efficient motels replaced the cabin camps that only twenty years earlier had supplanted the vaulted ceilings, "wasted lobbies," and endless hallways of the railroad hotels. Time-intensive trail trips were rendered obsolete. Nightly limits were imposed at most Glacier facilities and tourists- once encouraged to "spend the whole summer"<sup>53</sup> - were encouraged to tour the park quickly, and to stay at entrance or out-of-park accommodations.

Although this evolution was ultimately dictated by the demands of the traveling public and the pecuniary interests of the concessioners, it was also closely controlled by the National Park Service. Glacier superintendents first warned of the impending flood of auto travelers in the 1920s and called for the completion of cabin camps, campstores, and cafeterias in time for the opening of the Theodore Roosevelt and Going-to-the-Sun highways. The Great Northern acquiesced to these demands after rail travel dropped dramatically and after a private consulting firm indicated that the railroad's accommodation network no longer reflected market conditions. Similarly, the National Park Service demanded an increase in tourist facilities to accommodate increased tourist traffic and sought concessioners able to make the needed investment and interested in doing so.

In response to increased public outcry that the national parks were becoming more playground than nature refuge, the NPS also struggled to enact a policy accommodating both preservation and development interests. Architectural requirements increasingly stressed the unobtrusive and the serviceable. Sites of scenic splendor, once actively sought by concessioners with the approval of the NPS, were increasingly dismissed in favor of building sites less disruptive of the natural landscape. National Park Service and concessioner advocates of varied recreational opportunities - often equated with circus attractions - increasingly debated with public and private advocates of limited development.

The stream of tourists entering the park by rail, by automobile, and in ever-increasing numbers provided the link between phases of infrastructure development. Mutually dependent NPS administrators and concessioners struggled to accommodate, transport, and amuse this stream in a manner that both allowed for private profit and reflected varying philosophies on the purposes and needs of a national park.

#### **Amendment: J.W. Swanson and the Development of Boat Concession Operations**

The use of wooden boats in Glacier National Park for transportation and tourism was a natural extension of the existing boat culture on nearby Flathead Lake. The use of boats for transport from one end of the lake to the other provided a vital link between the two major rail lines pushing through Montana. Conquering the northern route through the Rockies in 1892, the Great Northern Railway opened up a vast new territory for accelerated settlement and industry. The Flathead Valley, with its abundant timber, water and moderate climate enticed thousands of people to transplant and take up residence there. One hundred miles south, the Northern Pacific Railway was completed through Missoula in 1883. To transport its cargo north, they built a spur line to the southern point of Flathead Lake at the town of Polson. The Great Northern Railway built a line south from Columbia Falls to the north end of the lake at Somers creating a corridor of commercial traffic along Flathead Lake requiring the use of larger steamships and tug-boats. Most of this commercial traffic was freight-related to logging and agriculture. As traffic increased, more specialized boat-builders and captains took up residence in the port towns of Somers and Polson. Without the thriving boatbuilding and steam-freight business on Flathead Lake so close to the future site of Glacier National Park, there may not have been such a fine collection of wooden vessels built for the park's burgeoning tourism industry.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen Mather quoted in Ise, *Our National Park Policy*, p. 198.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

One of the most prolific boat-builders during this golden age of boating on Flathead Lake, John William Swanson went on to transfer his expertise into developing the first park-wide boat concession in Glacier National Park. In fact, the history of boats in Glacier National Park is inextricably entwined with John Swanson. Born in Troy, Pennsylvania in 1883, he moved to Seattle, Washington in 1898 where he built his first boat at the age of 13. He moved to the Kalispell, Montana area in 1906 and immediately began working in the blossoming boat-building industry on Flathead Lake. The first known boat that he built was the *Flyer* in 1907 followed by the twin-screw, steam logging tug, *Westly Wells* in 1908.<sup>54</sup> That same year he made his first visit to the foot of Lake McDonald and noted “that there was no spot more beautiful in the entire state.”<sup>55</sup> Before shifting his focus to boat operations in those majestic glacial lakes though, he earned a strong reputation as a master boat builder for the growing freight traffic running up and down Flathead Lake. He operated his own company, the Flathead Boat Construction and Transportation Company. While he may have built more, at least 11 documented boats constructed by Swanson plied the waters of Flathead Lake. Of these Flathead Lake boats, most were steamers used for hauling machinery and timber; none remain.

Swanson’s first foray into the boating business in Glacier was construction of the launch *Ethel* in 1911 at Lake McDonald for Frank Kelly and partner Orville Denny.<sup>56</sup> Earlier that year, Kelly and Denny secured a boating concession contract for transporting visitors from the stages at Apgar to the various lodgings at the head of Lake McDonald. Visitors arriving at Belton Station on the Great Northern Railway were ferried across the Flathead River in small boats and transported to Apgar at the foot of the lake via stage coach. They then took the ten mile cruise to cabins and lodges operated by Kelly or George Snyder at the head of the lake.

As tourism to the park increased and a newly completed road along Flathead Lake began phasing out the need for boat transportation there, Swanson focused on broadening his boat business in Glacier. He transported one of his large Flathead Lake boats, the *City of Polson*, to the park in 1915, via the Flathead River and McDonald Creek. The epic journey up river proved Swanson a man of great skill and ingenuity; he and a crew of six men took two weeks to navigate about 60 miles of rapids, rocks, and sand bars and deliver the boat to Lake McDonald.<sup>57</sup> Once there, he dry-docked the boat, added ten feet to its length and rechristened it, *Lewtana*. It was contracted out by Kelly and John Lewis, owner of the Lewis Hotel (now Lake McDonald Lodge). The 71-ft. launch was capable of carrying over 100 passengers and operated through the summer of 1929 transporting tourists and baggage from Apgar to the variety of accommodations at the head of the lake.

The Glacier Transport Company, a transportation concession started in 1914, assumed the launches at Lake McDonald in 1929, and soon commissioned Swanson to construct one vessel to replace the entire ageing fleet. The scuttling of the *Lewtana* in 1929, along with the rest of the Lake McDonald fleet proved a significant moment in the park’s history as construction of the Going to the Sun Road was well underway and visitors used boats less for transportation and more for short sight-seeing cruises. The road had reached the Lewis Hotel at the head of Lake McDonald by 1921, depleting business from the tourist launches at Apgar. Swanson completed the 56-ft. new passenger launch, *DeSmet*, at his shop in Kalispell in a mere six

<sup>54</sup> White, Thain. “A Brief History of the Steamboating on Flathead Lake in Western Montana, and Roster of Flathead Lake Steamers Etc. 1883-1957.” Thain White Papers. Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana.

<sup>55</sup> Phyllis Clark, “Cap’n Swanson—Boat Builder,” *The Daily Inter Lake*, July 19, 1970.

<sup>56</sup> “History of Boat Operations on Lake McDonald, Glacier National Park.” History and Archaeology 1890-1951: Area and Service History, Folder 170-17. Glacier National Park Archives. West Glacier, MT.

<sup>57</sup> This story is told by many sources, but Swanson gives a first person telling in the article, “Cap’n Swanson—Boat Builder,” *The Daily Inter Lake*, July 19, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

weeks, and transported it by truck to the park for the 1930 season.<sup>58</sup> With visitors able to either drive or take a bus to the Lake McDonald Lodge, the *DeSmet* was used for scenic boat cruises with interpretive commentary; a role it continues to serve to this day, 85 years after its construction.

Swanson branched out from Lake McDonald to the east side of Glacier in 1916, contracting with the Glacier Park Hotel Company, the tourism subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway, hired Swanson to operate and maintain their 100-passenger launch, *St. Mary*, the smaller 20-passenger vessel, *Glacier*, and build an additional boat for visitor transportation and cruises on St. Mary Lake.<sup>59</sup> The Great Northern Railway received a permit to operate two gasoline launches on St. Mary Lake and began their use in June 1912.<sup>60</sup> After spending three seasons assisting the Glacier Park Hotel Company with its St. Mary Lake launches, Swanson set his sights on developing his own boat concession on the lakes located in the east side of the park. He wrote to Superintendent Walter W. Payne on November 4, 1919 with his prospectus: "It is my desire to maintain row boats for hire on Two Medicine Lake, St. Mary Lake, and McDermott (Swiftcurrent) Lake, as well as launches on Two Medicine Lake, during the coming season and a launch on Lake McDermott when facilities there permit."<sup>61</sup> Approval came for a one-year contract, and Swanson began operating his own boat concession in the summer of 1920.

Renewing his concession contract on a yearly term, Swanson went into a prolific period of boat-building launching seven boats over the next decade. His first boat constructed for use on the east-side of the park was the 36-ft. gasoline launch, *Wymufus* on Two Medicine Lake. Like his other Glacier-inspired boats, the *Wymufus* featured a white oak stem and frames, keel of deadwood fir, and planking made from local cedar.<sup>62</sup> According to Superintendent J.R. Eakin's Annual Report in 1921, the new vessel at Two Medicine Lake "provided popular pleasure and fishing cruise trips to park visitors."<sup>63</sup> In 1925 he launched two more similarly designed 36-ft. vessels at Many Glacier; the *Josephine* (later renamed *Alton* and *Altyn*) went into service on Josephine Lake and the *Grinnell* began operating on Lake McDermott (soon to be renamed Swiftcurrent Lake) next to the Many Glacier Hotel.<sup>64</sup> The two boats operated in tandem taking passengers from the hotel across both lakes but requiring a short 0.2 mile walk to transfer boats. The charge for a round-trip fare was \$0.50.<sup>65</sup> Sadly, none of these 36-ft. vessels survived the harsh mountainous conditions and were scuttled after falling into disrepair by the beginning of the 1940s.

The summer of 1926 proved a banner year for Swanson and boating on Glacier's eastside lakes. He constructed and launched two new 45-ft., 50-passenger vessels; the *Rising Wolf* on Two Medicine Lake and the *Little Chief* on St. Mary Lake. The *Little Chief*, built and operated under contract with the Glacier Park

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Multiple letters detail the business partnership between Swanson and the Glacier Park Hotel Co. Most notable are correspondence concerning the construction the launch, *Little Chief*, in 1926. "H.A. Noble, General Manager, Glacier Park Hotel Co. to R.R. Vincent, Asst. Superintendent," March 15, 1926, Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Unit 007, Glacier Park Hotel Company, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>60</sup> "The Honorable, The Secretary of the Interior to Acting Superintendent," June 19, 1912. Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Unit 006, Folder 1, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>61</sup> J.W. Swanson to W.W. Payne, Nov. 4, 1919. Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Unit 006, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>62</sup> J.W. Swanson, "Specification of 36 Foot Boats for Glacier National Park," Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Unit 006, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>63</sup> J.R. Eakin, "Superintendent's Report 1921," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921.

<sup>64</sup> J.W. Swanson to Asst. Superintendent H.W. Hutchings, March 1, 1925, Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Unit 006, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

Hotel Company, provided additional capacity alongside the larger, *St. Mary*.<sup>66</sup> The *Rising Wolf* operated as part of Swanson's concession contract providing the primary service alongside the *Wymufus* on busy Two Medicine Lake.<sup>67</sup> The 1920s proved a tourist bonanza in the park as thousands of wealthy Americans from the East Coast made Glacier National Park their summer playground. Boats and horses provided access for the extensive system of backcountry chalets and campgrounds; the addition of new, larger capacity boats to this important tourist and transportation cog yielded improved service for these early enthusiastic intrepid tourists. Tours at the time, similarly to today, lasted from 45 minutes to 1 ½ hours.

The Glacier Park Hotel Company was so pleased with Swanson's work that they commissioned him to build a much larger boat for launch on Waterton Lake, just north of the U.S.-Canada border adjacent to Glacier in Waterton Lakes Provincial Park.<sup>68</sup> Work began as the 1926 summer season came to a close with Swanson drawing up plans for a 73-ft. long by 17-ft. beam launch able to carry 250 passengers.<sup>69</sup> The remote location and distance from his shop in Somers, Montana required building a make-shift shop at the head of Waterton Lake in early spring of 1927 that eventually became the vessel's boathouse. Portions of the boat were pre-fabricated in Somers and then transported to Waterton for assembly. The boathouse lacked electricity, so all tools ran off belts attached to a single gasoline engine. While the difficulty in transporting materials to Canada made the task more difficult, the new launch, *International* began carrying passengers during the summer of 1927.

While Swanson built and launched the *DeSmet* for the Glacier Transport Company on Lake McDonald in 1930, his business and boating priorities remained on the east side of the park. He built the 45½ ft. by 11½ ft. beam, *Chief Two Guns* in 1933 to replace the launch *Grinnell* on Swiftcurrent Lake.<sup>70</sup> As with all of his boats, this 60-passenger vessel featured cedar planks on oak frames. At this point in his career, Swanson was 53 years old and had built more than twenty significant boats for both Flathead Lake and Glacier National Park. Because his wife, Emma, struggled with the cold Montana climate in her later years, the Swansons began spending winters in California.

By 1938, Swanson found a couple of local buyers for his boats and the NPS concession contract in Glacier National Park. He wrote to Park Superintendent E.T. Scoyen, "I am recommending Mr. Arthur Burch and Carl Anderson who are planning on taking over my interests and carry on the boat operation in about the same agreement as I have had in the past with the National Park Service."<sup>71</sup> Burch and Anderson, local Kalispell businessmen, saw the great opportunity to assume such an established business operation inside the park. Swanson vouched for the two men, but lamented, "I personally regret leaving the Park as I have had the pleasure of helping to develop the boat business and wish the new owners all the success that you can extend them."<sup>72</sup> Burch and Anderson initially paid \$25,000 to buy out the contract and associated

<sup>66</sup> Superintendent Kraebel to D.R. Hull, January 12, 1927. Series "Concessions," 901-02 Permits, Glacier Park Hotel Company Launches, Unit 020, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT. Applying for approval of "a new boathouse for the auxiliary launch Little Chief acquired last summer..."

<sup>67</sup> Department of the Interior. Transportation Permit, Jan. 1, 1926-Dec. 31, 1926. Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Unit 006, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>68</sup> In 1934, Waterton Lakes Provincial Park and Glacier National Park became the world's first designated International Peace Park.

<sup>69</sup> Swanson, J.W. "Specifications for 250 capacity Launch," Feb. 23, 1927. Series "Concessions," 900-05 Correspondence, Unit 011, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from Superintendent E.T. Scoyen to Director NPS, Nov. 2, 1934. Series "Concessions," 900-05 Correspondence, Unit 011, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>71</sup> J.W. Swanson to E.T. Scoyen, April 9, 1938. Series "Concessions," 900-05 Correspondence, Unit 011, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

boats, boathouses and other equipment, while Swanson assisted them through the first summer in 1938.<sup>73</sup> The newly renamed Glacier Park Boat Company has operated continually by the same family since that time.

One of the last things Swanson hoped to achieve was to replace the 1925 launch *Altyn* on Josephine Lake with a larger vessel comparable to the newer 1933 launch, *Chief Two Guns* on Swiftcurrent Lake.<sup>74</sup> One problem with the plan was that the capacity of the *Altyn* was 40 passengers while the *Chief Two Guns* capacity was sixty.<sup>75</sup> The boats were to serve in coordination with each other with the *Chief Two Guns* stationed in Swiftcurrent Lake and *Altyn* on Lake Josephine. After passengers disembarked from one, they would hike a short distance between the lakes to the other. However, the passenger capacity difference between the two boats precluded all the passengers fitting onto the smaller boat. According to Burch's grandson, Art Burch, Jr. Swanson planned to help build a replacement boat as part of the business transition. Unfortunately, World War II delayed such plans as Swanson supervised shipyards on Terminal Island in Los Angeles Harbor. Toward the close of the war, Swanson returned to Montana and co-built with Burch the 45-ft. cedar plank and oak frame vessel, *Big Chief*.<sup>76</sup> The *Chief Two Guns* moved up to Josephine Lake and the *Big Chief* operated on Swiftcurrent Lake from its 1945 launch until 1961 when it too moved to Josephine Lake, rechristened *Morning Eagle*. It continues to operate on Josephine Lake to this day with all repairs done in its boathouse at the foot of the lake.

During World War II, the Glacier Park Hotel Company struggled with the cost of maintaining its St. Mary fleet and competing with the new bus fleet driving the Going to the Sun Road; in 1941, they wrote to Superintendent D.S. Libbey, "In view of the fact that these costs are prohibitive and the revenue does not warrant the expense, this company has decided to relinquish our preference rights for the launch service on St. Mary Lake in favor of Burch and Anderson."<sup>77</sup> After the war, Arthur J. Burch became sole owner and operator of the Glacier Park Boat Company, and in 1953, Burch bought out all the "physical assets of the Glacier Park Transport Company used in connection with the launch service on Lake McDonald."<sup>78</sup>

After the end of World War II, the *Little Chief* was purchased from the Glacier Park Hotel Company, moved to Two Medicine Lake to replace the *Wymufus*, and renamed, *Sinopah*.<sup>79</sup> The *Rising Wolf* and *Sinopah* operated simultaneously until 1975 when the *Rising Wolf* was moved to Many Glacier to temporary fill in after the *Chief Two Guns II*<sup>80</sup> was rendered inoperable after being hit by an avalanche while in winter storage. Once the season ended, the *Rising Wolf* sat outside and was damaged by heavy snow loads. It was restored in 1990 by Arthur J. Burch's grandsons, brothers Art and Scott Burch and cousin Mark

<sup>73</sup> J.W. Swanson to Dept. of Interior, June 7, 1938. Series "Concessions," 900-05 Correspondence, Unit 011, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>74</sup> J.W. Swanson to Superintendent E.T. Scoyen, Oct. 1934. Series "Concessions," 900-05 Correspondence, Unit 011, Folder 4, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Interviews with Arthur J. Burch's grandsons and current owners of the Glacier Park Boat Company, Art Burch, Jr. and Scott Burch to James Hackthorn. Fall 2014. Columbia Falls, MT.

<sup>77</sup> A.A. Aszmann to D.S. Libbey, March 6, 1941. Series "Concessions," 900-05 Correspondence, Glacier Park Hotel Company, Unit 015, Folder 3, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>78</sup> Hillory A. Tolson, Regional Director to Howard H. Hays, June 4, 1953. Series "Concessions," 900-02 Contracts and Permits, Glacier Park Hotel Company, Unit 007, Glacier National Park Archives, West Glacier, MT.

<sup>79</sup> Much of the Glacier National Park archival papers between the 1950s-1970s were lost. Interviews with Arthur J. Burch's grandsons, Arthur and Scott Burch helped fill in these gaps about how and why the Little Chief and Rising Wolf were moved and renamed.

<sup>80</sup> Built by Arthur J. Burch in 1961 to replace original *Chief Two Guns*.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

VanArtsdale. It was rechristened *Little Chief* and placed on St. Mary Lake.

Today, five of Swanson's wooden boats continue to ply the waters of Glacier National Park and Waterton Lakes Provincial Park in Canada, operating, in the cases of the *The Rising Wolf* (now *Little Chief*), *Little Chief* (now *Sinopah*), *International*, and *DeSmet* for over eight decades, 70 years for the *Morning Eagle* (formerly *Big Chief*) carrying passengers on narrated scenic boat cruises every summer between May and September with annual maintenance performed using traditional methods and materials.

Swanson's beautiful historic boats serve as a direct link to the early days of Glacier National Park; today's visitors climb aboard a launch and experience the same feelings and emotions as those first tourists decades ago. The boats served and continue to operate as an integral part of the park's tourism development, carrying thousands of passengers across glacially carved lakes every summer. Swanson deserves recognition as the original boat builder for the park and as the first park-wide boat concession operator. The boats of Glacier National Park serve as Swanson's legacy and that of the Burch family who continue to maintain and operate these boats much in the same manner as Swanson, thus preserving an important facet of the Park's history.

## F. Associated Property Types

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

### A Property Types

**I. Name of Property Type:** Historic Boats of Glacier National Park

## II. Description:

The original Multiple Property Listing touched on the importance of boats to the concession industry. Witnessing Glacier in all of its spectacular glory was not incumbent on traveling on land. Horse, hiking, and later automobiles proved popular ways to see the park, however, forays by boat for travel and pleasure have also been an integral part of the park experience since its establishment.

This property type includes those boats constructed by J. W. Swanson between 1920 and 1945 that are still used in a recreational or tourist capacity on the lakes of Glacier National Park. All of Swanson's existing vessels share a consistent construction and hull design as well as a utilitarian style common among smaller freshwater transport and freight boats of the period. The boats are carvel-planked with local cedar attached to steam-bent oak frames with keels constructed of fir. The superstructures (cabins, ceiling, sole, overhead, roof, etc.) consist of a variety of materials. All of the vessels are hard-topped and feature an enclosed passenger cabin with sliding windows to protect tourists from the elements. Between May and September they operate on lakes inside Glacier National Park; the remainder of the year they reside within boathouses, also inside the park.

Though some of the original wood material has required periodic replacement through the years due to rot and other damage, the majority remains intact. In addition, the boats retain the majority of their original planking, frames, keel structures, and superstructure (cabins, ceiling, overhead, sole, roof, etc.) materials from the time of construction. Modifications generally relate to safety and accessibility issues required by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and National Park Service. Both agencies allow maintenance and minor modifications consistent with the original vessel and sympathetic to the historic nature of the boats ensuring their retention of integrity.

Three of the boats, *Little Chief*, *Sinopah*, and *Morning Eagle* are roughly the same dimensions around 45 feet in length and carrying a USCG regulated 49 passengers. The *International* on Waterton Lake measures

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

73 feet long and carries 250 passengers. The *DeSmet* is 56 feet in length with a carrying capacity of 70. All original gasoline engines have been replaced by higher efficiency diesel engines to comply with NPS contractual standards. The USCG and NPS mandated the replacement of the engines due to the danger associated with gasoline engines in wooden boats; the use of diesel engines significantly reduces the risk of combustion. This mandate from the USCG and the National Park Service was directed toward increasing passenger safety and of lessening the boats' environmental impact.<sup>81</sup>

### Significance

#### *B. The Historic Boats of Glacier National Park and National Register Criteria*

This amendment to the Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing examines boats constructed from 1920 to 1945 that ply the waters of the lakes in the Park. The specific means by which a boat may meet each of the National Register criteria are discussed below.

National Register Criterion A: Under Criterion A, a historic boat may be eligible for the National Register through its association with historic themes. Applicable area of significance for boats may include:

- **Transportation:** All historic boats eligible for listing in the National Register are associated with broad patterns of transportation. While the boats that serve Glacier National Park have come to be identified with tourism, often their initial use was much more practical—the ferrying of cargo, supplies, and people to different areas of the Park. Boats served as part of a three-prong approach, along with motorized vehicles and saddle-horses, within the greater accommodations network.
- **Entertainment/Recreation:** Eventually, the use of boats on the lakes of Glacier National Park were meant to enhance the experience of visitors to the Park. Boats offered a different means to witness the wonders of the Park in contrast to horse or automobile. Instead of viewing the Park from land, including the lakes, one was able to reverse the lens and view the land from water. Beginning around 1915, boats assumed a greater role in Park tourism, and by 1929, a larger role in short sight-seeing cruises and less for actual transportation.

National Register Criterion B: Under Criterion B, an historic boat may be eligible for the National Register if a historically significant person's importance directly relates to the vessel. Although the historic boats that continue to ply the waters of Glacier National Park are the design and construction of a single individual, J.W. Swanson, properties significant as a result of an engineer's skill or an architect's design are generally significant under Criteria C.

National Register Criterion C: Under Criterion C, an historic boat in Glacier National Park may be eligible for listing in the National Register if it embodies "the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, possess high artistic value or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction." Applicable areas of significance for this criterion include architecture and engineering.

The design and construction of a boat is concomitant with an understanding of their use and operation. In the case of the historic boats that operate on the lakes in Glacier, they represent not only the designs of a

<sup>81</sup> Documentation regarding the mandate is held in the offices of the Glacier Boat Company, Columbia Falls, Montana.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

particular individual, J.W. Swanson, but also the actual physical manifestation of those designs constructed by the same party. The boats continue to illustrate the construction techniques used at the time, and specifically, by a single individual. Prior to the operation of his own boating concession in the Park, Swanson's skills were such that he was sought out by existing boating firms to construct their new vessels.

**National Register Criterion D:** Under Criterion D, boat remains may be eligible under this criterion if it can yield important information about boat technology or construction. This information should not be available through other sources such as historical documents or existing boats. The remains of Swanson's *Lewtana* are submerged near Fish Creek campground on Lake McDonald. Although a significant amount of the boat's structure remains, investigation of the remains would likely yield little additional evidence regarding Swanson or his boats as several of Swanson's vessels are still intact and continue to be used in the Park.

**Registration Requirements**

The period of significance falls within the dates defined in the original Multiple Property Submission, 1920-1945.

**National Register Criterion A: a boat operating within the confines of Glacier National Park may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A if it was or is:**

1) Associated with boat transportation between 1910 and 1945: Though the boats on the lakes in Glacier National Park serve as one of the most visible symbols of Park tourism, they functioned initially to move cargo and people to different points of the Park. Boats served as one method of transporting goods and passengers from rail and stage lines to the lodgings; their use proved vital to the entire park accommodation network. As interior access within the Park improved through roads and the use of motorized vehicles, the function of boats gravitated toward recreation, specifically sight-seeing. Any boat that operated to ferry either cargo or people from one destination to another within the Park from 1910 to 1945 and that maintains historic integrity may be eligible for listing under Criterion A.

2) Associated with recreation in Glacier National Park between 1910 and 1945: Improvements related to access, specifically the construction of roads and the increased use of motorized vehicles, resulted in a shift regarding the role of boats in the Park. Though used to some degree for recreation early in the Park's history, boats came to assume a greater role in true tourism activities. By 1930, the DeSmet operated purely for recreational purposes. Although no longer a vital component of the transportation of the park, boats concessions expanded to accommodate the ever-increasing recreational demands brought on by the auto tourist. By the middle of the 1940s, three concessionaires operated within the park including the Glacier Park Boat Company, the Glacier Park Company, and the Glacier Park Transport Company. A small number of these boats associated with this activity remain; any boat that operated in a tourism capacity from 1910 to 1945 and that maintains historic integrity may be eligible for listing under Criteria A.

**National Register Criterion C: a boat operating within the confines of Glacier National Park may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C if it was or is:**

1) Constructed by, or under the supervision of J. W. Swanson. Swanson's mark on the nascent Glacier National Park boating concession is undeniable. His legacy as the most prolific boat builder and recognition of his building skills within the Park helped jump-start the water-based industry and provided continuity and stability through the years. Swanson-constructed boats dominated the lakes of Glacier. His reputation and knowledge of boat-craft allowed him to build boats not only for his own concession, but also for concessions operated by other companies.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

The boats constructed by Swanson share similarities to other powered, carvel planked vessels from the early 1900s operating in rivers and lakes across the country, but display a unique style consistent in all Swanson designed and built boats. His designs display a mastery of mixing flowing lines and beautiful bright work with the stout construction necessary to meet the park's large glacial lakes and extreme weather.

Swanson's influence permeated nearly every aspect of the early boating concessions in Glacier. In addition to his operation under his own concession's permit, he held a contract with the Glacier Park Hotel Company (a subsidiary of the Great Northern Railway), had business dealings with the Glacier Transportation Company, Frank Kelly, John Lewis, culminating with the sale of his concession contract and assets to Arthur J. Burch and the Burch family in 1938.

2) Built and maintained using traditional early twentieth century materials and techniques. Eligible boats must continue to retain their cedar plank wood hulls on oak frames. In addition, the superstructures of the boats must retain the majority of their original materials including the cabin, ceiling, overhead, sole, and roof framing. Retention of the original engines is not a requirement for listing in the National Register.

### **Integrity**

While much of the integrity discussion presented in the original MPD remains relevant, the discussion can be further refined for its applicability to the specific resource of this amendment, boats.

Design, Materials, Workmanship: Eligible boats must retain the majority their character-defining construction features. Decades of use in an often inhospitable environment necessitates periodic replacement of portions of some of the wooden components. Not unlike land-based resources that also require replacement of original fabric over time, the sheer nature of the environment to which boats and vessels are exposed ultimately results in similar replacement, only at an accelerated pace. Changes to a boat to continue operation historically or restoratively, and that are done with materials similar in composition, design, color, texture, and workmanship retain the historic character of the structure and do not affect the boat's integrity. Integrity continues through the retention of hull form, rig, use of materials, and craftsmanship.<sup>82</sup>

Location: Because boats are not stationary, integrity of location becomes less relevant other than in a general sense. The boats that ply the lakes retain sound locational integrity by virtue they still operate in the same waters where they were launched in the Park.

Setting, Feeling, and Association: While some changes have occurred within the Park, the changes are modest with the result that setting, feeling and association remain strong. A tourist today would see and experience a nearly identical landscape resulting in the same feeling as one perusing the area by boat 70 years ago. This experience would be enhanced by the historic nature of the boats. The association between the boats and the area they operate remains as strong as the day the boats initially launched.

### **G. Geographical Data**

All of the resources included in this submission are located within Glacier National Park, Flathead and Glacier counties, Montana.

<sup>82</sup> *National Register Bulletin 20, Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington D.C: Washington Printing Office, 1985), p. 8.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Glacier National Park Multiple Property Listing  
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
State

## H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

Although boats and boating concessions were lightly discussed in the original Multiple Property Listing, the context *Development of Recreation (Concession) Infrastructure in Glacier National Park, 1910-1945*, generally focused on documenting land-based buildings and structures. The importance of boats to the Park was not fully explored.

In the summer of 1988, National Park Service Maritime Historian Kevin Foster visited Glacier National Park and inspected Swanson's remaining vessels. At that time, he recognized the significance of the boats and recommended the preparation of a Multiple Property Submission should be considered for the boat's listing in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>83</sup> In 1995, Ann Huber prepared the 1995 Glacier National Park Multiple Property Submission that included the historic boathouses associated with two of the remaining Swanson boats; however, listing the actual boats fell outside the purview of the document.

In the Fall of 2013, Scott and Barbara Burch, owners of Swanson's vessels and operators of the Glacier Park Boat Company, hired long-time employee, James Hackethorn to begin the process of recognition of the boats on the National Register of Historic Vessels. Hackethorn, who helps maintain and also captains the vessels during the summers, received his M.A. in History from New Mexico State University in 2010.

Deidre Shaw at the Glacier National Park Archives proved extremely helpful in locating pertinent files to piecing together the history of Swanson and his boats in the park. Almost all of the amended history is directly from primary materials located at this archive in West Glacier, Montana. Swanson worked for three different park concessionaires; The Glacier Park Hotel Company (Great Northern Railway subsidiary), The Glacier Transport Company, and his own boat tour and rental concession, so the files are located in a several different places in the archive.

The other major source of information was the oral history given through interviews with the grandsons of Arthur J. Burch (consolidated Swanson's boats and operations in the Glacier Park Boat Company). Scott Burch is the current owner of the Glacier Park Boat Company and he and his brother Art grew up living in Glacier National Park. Their remembrances helped fill in historical gaps in the archival materials. According to Shaw, the archival gaps from the 1950s through the 1960s were due to the destruction of many park documents by an overzealous park employee. The Burch brothers vividly recall stories from their father and grandfather about the early days of boating in the park.

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<sup>83</sup> Kevin Foster, Memorandum to Chief Historian, "Trip Report, August 29-September 2", National Park Service, 1988.

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Name of Multiple Property Listing

Montana  
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National Park Service

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